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XXXVI

THE TALENSE (*continued*)

Ceremonies in Connexion with Sowing and Harvest. The Talense Calendar

527 THERE appear to be at least three great festivals which are held by the Talense in connexion with the crops and harvest. These are:

(*a*) *Gologo*, held in the month of February by the whole of the Talense.

(*b*) *Bugram Waa* (lit. the *Bugram* dance) held in October by the following towns: Sia, Winduri, Gorogo, Wakyi, Teŋ'zugu, and Gbeo.

(*c*) *Da koom*, *Da mey* or simply *Waa*, (the dance) held by Bade and Tongo, in the months of August and September.

[171] Among the Nankanse we have seen that the October festival is called *Tingana* (the Groves), or simply *Waa* (the Dance), a festival which is held by Winkoŋo, Orogo, Kologo, and Na, in rotation.

(*a*) *The Gologo Ceremony*: It was my intention to have attended this ceremony in person; hence I omitted to obtain a full description of it. I am informed, however, that during the time when the festival is being held 'every one is permitted to abuse his neighbour and even to laugh at any physical deformity, and that no one is allowed to quarrel'.

[171] All this seems most reminiscent of the *Apo* ceremony, which has been described in another volume.[1] Circumstances, however, prevented me ever carrying out my intention, and a full description of this ceremony must be left to some other historian to record. I hope an account of it will be obtained before the extraordinarily rapid changes in conditions in these parts have interfered with or altered its characteristic observances.

527 793 796 ●535 *The Da koom and Da mey Ceremonies*: 'When we dance these, all our ancestors sleep. When the time approaches for the ceremonies, the *Ten'dan*' of Bade takes a calabash (*zu-gur*, lit. a head-calabash), puts it in a net, and hangs it outside the entrance to the *zoyo* hut. When the rain falls, it is filled. Before dawn, early in the morning after the appearance of the new moon, the Bat (*Anglice* Bade) *Ten'dan*' pours out

[1] See *Ashanti*, Chapter XV.

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some of the water from this calabash on the ground, saying: 'Your day is drawing near, and I wish to pour water for you that the corn may be good. Your moon stands.' A little only of the water is poured out, but the remainder is kept until the next moon, which is the *Daa mey* (or 'real' *Daa*). The first water is called *Ko'-beet* (bad water); the water poured out later is called *Ko'soŋ* (good water). Until the *Ten'dan'* of Bade has performed this ceremony no one may begin to hold the custom; we dance thirty nights at the grove. Seven days after the bad water is poured out, beer and a fowl are given to the land with the words:

'*Misore* and his father wish to come forth; receive, and let the women and children come out to dance and let the men meet them there. Prevent headache and belly-ache and may everything bad on the land (snakes, scorpions) hide away.'

As they dance they sing: *La pug dill* (the corn is blooming).

At the end of thirty days the Bade *Ten'dan'* pours out the rest of the water on the ground, saying: 'This is the good water I am pouring to-day; may the land become good; may women bear children and the corn become good.' He pours out the whole of the water. The *Daa mey* has now arrived and the people dance for fifteen nights, singing: *Laa moo zimi* (It [the corn] is red). Every one assembles by the full moon at the grove called *Pusig* (the name of a tree now no longer standing).

The *Ten'dan'* of Gbeo sacrifices at *Misore's* grave.[1] When he reaches the grove, he takes some beer, flour, and a fowl, which the Chief of Tɔngo has given him, and sacrifices at the spot where the *pusig* tree used to stand, saying to the land: 'The Chief gives me these things for you because the days (of the festival) are ending. We wish to return the drums to the house; allow the women and children to sleep in peace; allow the men to go hunting.' He then makes the sacrifices.

The drums, called *Tusgunwaa*, are kept by the Chief and are never brought out except at this ceremony or at a death. '*Daa* is a dance on the land that it may know all is well.'

Formerly the day of sowing was common to all, so all harvests became ripe at the same time. Now people plant independently, so that the reaping is done at different times. The *Da koom* may not be held until all the *nara* is cut, so that the date is not now constant.

[1] See *History*, Chapter XXXIII.

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Kusase

764 for a cloth'. When the skin is put on the corpse, the tail comes in front and the three cowries are placed on it. This gives rise to a Kusase oath
[195] *M'ba ne o ligidi ta*[1] (My father and his three cowries). Only the back of the goatskin is used; the flesh and the skin off the belly are cooked outside the compound and must only be partaken of by those who have lost their fathers.

764 When a man dies, his wife's brother will bring roots which are
765 boiled in water in which the widows bathe for three days, and after the third day the roots are buried (by a man who has lost his
[314] wife) in the cattle-kraal, or behind the compound. Each widow is then given a fruit of the *kponkporog* palm tree, from which the contents of the shell have been removed and "medicine" from "roots" put in its place. For a month, a little of this must be put in all the food which they eat. When they see the new moon, they will put aside this fruit and begin to prepare beer for the second funeral custom which is called *ku dar*. This date will be fixed by the *kudan*—the one in charge of the funeral custom—who is the heir. The first part of the funeral is called *ku-masir*[2] (the wet funeral). *Ku-dar* (the second funeral) is
765 derived from the word *dar*, to give some one permission to go off. "He
769 (the dead) will not go until all these things have been done." A day is fixed to begin the making of the beer, called *ku-malem* or *zel* (the setting of the funeral (beer). On that day, all the daughters of the deceased, who have married elsewhere, assemble at the compound of the deceased. Every one brings a fowl and a guinea-fowl; grain food

[171] [1] The Nankanse of Winkogo and the Black and Red *Tendana* have a similar oath, i.e. *Kare perega la ligidi ita.*

● [535 831] [2] The night of the *ku-masir* custom, there is a dance at which the women choose men (*poa-leasig*). All the 'strangers' line up with the townspeople opposite them. The 'stranger' women choose from the townsmen and the townswomen from the men who are 'strangers'. A girl comes forward and touches the man of her choice with her finger. Some men will be chosen by two or three girls, another man may not be chosen at all. Such a one, *o nyu kuk* (has drunk of a bitter tree). These girls, except those who are married, pass the night with the man or men whom they have selected, sleeping on one mat with them, but they do not have sexual intercourse with each other. It would be a disgraceful thing if they did so. When I expressed scepticism as to this, I was informed that in the old days youths and maidens took great pride in resisting such temptations, and sought it rather than avoided it. The two sexes everywhere joined in games, dances, and swimming. A youth's ambition was to be renowned as a hunter, or good farmer, or wrestler. There was a firm belief that a profligate would be killed by an arrow in his first fight, or bitten by a snake. My informant said Europeans separated boys and girls in our schools and told boys not to think about women, and in consequence young boys were now always thinking about such things.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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weather causes anxiety about the crops; for famine is the greatest social calamity they can imagine and is a very real menace. I have heard people speak of the last great famine that swept the country, some forty years ago, with a poignancy that made one realize how deeply dread of famine is stamped into the native's outlook on life. 'It is our black man's thing this (*ti gbansablɔg ycl n-a-de*)', they say, 'from the days of our fathers and forefathers'—or, as we might put it, it is a law of nature for the black man. 'The white man has saved us. If there is hunger now we can buy grain from Mampurugu or Kusaa.' Sombrely they describe how in times of famine people ate grass and weeds fit only for animals, and died on the footpaths. Men deserted wife and child to seek sustenance among distant relatives who had a little food. They took their own children to sell into slavery among the Mamprusi for food. The social order broke down completely.

Sufficient crops of the staple cereals mean survival, good crops mean joy to the Tallensi. They show it in the Harvest Festival that marks the end of the farming year. If the harvest is poor, they say, people attend the dances perfunctorily and dance without enthusiasm. But in a good year, as I saw in 1936, no one can be held back from the dances. Young mothers steal out to them with their babes in their arms, sedate elders fling themselves into the rout with the zest and energy of striplings. There is a general feeling of elation. 'Our bodies are full of strength (*ti nɛŋ kpɛŋŋa*)', is how the natives describe it.

A successful farming year not only provides for the satisfaction of the fundamental physical needs of existence; it gives security to the social order. There is ample evidence of this in the busy and cheerful atmosphere of the market-places, and, more significantly, in the spate of ceremonial activities that follows on a satisfactory harvest; for all Tale ceremonial activities express and fortify relationships of amity and interdependence. For the individual the physical well-being of himself and his dependants—sufficiency of food, good health, and the increase of offspring—is a sign that all is well with the social order. The ritual symbols in which the forces that shape Tale social organization and keep it on a steady course are objectified and made emotionally tangible go back to this fact of native experience. The stereotyped formula with which a prayer offered at any shrine is usually concluded epitomizes this: 'Grant that fields be farmed (fruitfully), that live-stock breed, that offspring be born, that (undisturbed) sleep be slept (*Kye ka kuo kɔ, ka guul guul, ka dɔŋam dɔŋa, ka guom gbis*).'

Productive Efficiency and the Bounds set by Nature

Now what does the achievement of sufficiency of food and general physical well-being depend upon? It is quite clear, from the way the natives carry on their agricultural activities and the way they think and talk about them that, other things being equal, they consider skill and industry to be the main factors of efficiency. But variations in efficiency between a *gukpaa*, a slothful farmer, and a proper *kpa'at*, an industrious hoe-man, mean only a difference in their respective standards of consumption. One has rather less food and other goods than the other.

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lineal kin of both parties. One of the best-remembered fights of this kind broke out between Gorogo and Wakii in the very year that the British appeared on the scene of Tale life. It occurred in circumstances that made it a mystical calamity which these two clans are still expiating.

On the day that marks the climax of the *Gəlib* Festival, all the Talis and thousands of non-Talis from the rest of the country congregate on the summit of the Tong Hills for a great ritual dance. It is in the main a dance of the men of the Hill Talis clans. They come up and dance in clan contingents, wearing festive garb and carrying their weapons. The tumult is indescribable. The throngs of spectators, men, women, and children, milling backwards and forwards, the rhythmic thud of stamping feet, the harsh lilt of the choruses pulsating against the babel of the crowd, the shimmer of sweating bodies and gaudy attire, the ritual officers in their finest skins and black caps, the swift, snake-like convolutions of the dancers, all this makes a scene of thrilling excitement. The taut bodies and tense expression of the dancers show that they are keyed up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm; and as they dance in separate clan contingents, an intense feeling of clan unity and pride is created in each group.

Each clan contingent accompanies its dancing with choruses for which new verses on topical themes are made every year. And the point of most of these songs is the superiority of that particular clan to all other people. There is a strong feeling of rivalry between the various clan contingents, which grows keener and keener as the day advances. The old men say that careful watch must always be kept lest any of the young men start fighting. For though there is a ritual truce on all forms of strife throughout Taleland during *Gəlib*, passions are easily inflamed during the dances.

These were the circumstances in which the fight between Gorogo and Wakii took place. The two contingents were dancing near each other. The Gorogo men sang, defiantly, '(We are like) the adder, woo! If others wish to, let them tread on its tail and see'. The Wakii contingent flung back '(We are) a beehive, woo! If others wish to, let them touch us and see'. The dancing became more furious and the two groups drew nearer and nearer each other. And then, suddenly, they clashed. In the mêlée several men were killed and many wounded before the tendaanas and men of other clans could separate them.

Bloodshed during *Gəlib* is a dreadful sacrilege; bloodshed on Tenzugu on the day of the most important ceremonies and during the dancing is a religious enormity that cannot be compared to anything else in the Tale calendar of sins. The people of Gorogo and Wakii atoned for their sacrilege by the sacrifice of many cattle and sheep to the Earth, but they have not yet freed themselves of its consequences. The Earth still exacts the toll of death after death from the sons and grandsons of the original sinners. No reprisals were taken by either clan and their relations with each other were not affected by this fight.

Such fights could not develop into general wars because they took place between clans that are closely linked together by ties of clanship or ritual collaboration, or are connected through an intercalary unit that

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PLATE XV

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(*a*) A mimic war parade at Ba'ari to inaugurate an elder's funeral.

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(*b*) The widest politico-ritual community includes all the Tallensi. Part of the vast gathering of people from all over Taleland who come to take part in or watch the concluding ceremonies and dances of the Golib Festival. Note the dust cloud raised by the dancers.

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which Tale children develop in the course of their education. I have tried to indicate only some typical interests and their relation to the educational process.

Skills. The acquisition of skills also commences in early infancy, with the child's first experiments in motor co-ordination and speech. Bodily dexterity provides merely the foundation upon which are subsequently built up the socially important skills of adult life. They include not only the predominantly manual skills, such as are connected with farming and care of live stock, with hunting, fishing, building, thatching, cooking, housekeeping and gardening, and the technology of specialists, but also non-manual skills, such as a knowledge of the kinship system, of ritual and ceremonial, of economically useful herbs and roots and of others used as drugs to cure illness, of buying and selling, of law and custom—in short, of the whole body of cultural definitions which guide the Talɔŋa in his daily existence. Such skills are the end-results of education; and it will be obvious that they represent merely the cognitive and motor aspects of activities rooted in developing interests and fostered by the expectation of normal behaviour. Typical skills will be referred to as we proceed, but one general feature must be noted here. Children in Taleland are remarkably free from over-solicitious supervision. They have the maximum freedom and responsibility commensurate with their skill and maturity. On the one hand they can go where they like and do what they like, on the other they are held fully responsible for tasks entrusted to them. Thus, a 6-year-old is quite often charged with the care of an infant for several hours at a stretch. Girls of 9 or 10 can be seen in large numbers in every market, selling or buying things for their mothers or themselves. Boys of this age and even younger swarm in the markets. One market day I discovered a boy of about 10–11 selling a basketful of leaves used as a food for animals which he had himself collected in the bush near his settlement. He hoped to earn a penny or twopence to buy arrow-heads for himself. Another day a boy of about the same age offered his services to the butcher. He earned a tenth of a penny which he spent on a feed of locust-bean flour for himself and a friend. Similarly, when there is dancing at a homestead, the children of about 6 years and upwards from the whole neighbourhood congregate there and remain till

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dawn. They might tell their parents where they are going, but would not be sent for to come home.

Numerous instances could be added to illustrate further the freedom allowed to children. Of the responsibility allotted to them in applying their skills and their appreciation of it, one good example may be quoted. I was chatting with a group of boys, aged about 7–11 years, at sunset one day, when Duunbil, the oldest of them, suddenly exclaimed, clasping his hands in a gesture expressing both amusement and consternation: 'Ma! I've forgotten to untie the goats; I'll get a whipping.' 'You'd better run,' one of the others advised, as he dashed away. His companions explained that he had pegged his father's goats out in the morning to graze and that it was his duty to bring them home again. Goats cannot be left out all night lest hyenas catch them. A few days later I met Duunbil again and he told me, with a grin, that he had not managed to bring the goats in till after dark, but that he had been let off with a mild beating.

Children and adolescents share economic tasks in accordance with their skill and maturity, and they have a strong sense of the rights to which they are entitled in consequence. An adolescent has the right to be adequately fed and supported by his or her parents in return for co-operation in agricultural or domestic work. I have known of youths running away from home when they considered themselves to be badly treated in these respects. Children expect to have their services acknowledged in a similar way. Yindol, aged about 11, an intelligent and enterprising lad, was already giving his father valuable assistance, both in the care of live stock and in farming. When the great dances came round, Yindol wanted a new loin cloth. His father refused to buy him one, whereupon Yindol went on strike, neglected the chickens, the donkeys, the goats and refused to go to the bush farm even after a beating. In the end his father had to yield. *Bii la mar buurt*—'The boy has justice on his side'—he said, when he told me the story.

A similar incident occurred with a man who supplied us with milk for a short while. Money is scarce in Taleland and 2*s.* 6*d.* a month is an enviable addition to family resources. Yet one day he came to tell me apologetically that he could no longer sell me milk. Why? His small son, whose job it was to herd the cow, had rebelled. He

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discriminatory responses to real situations, and linking it up with other patterns of behaviour and with norms of observance. The total pattern is not built up brick by brick, like a house, but evolves from the embryonic form.

A simple demonstration of this principle is provided by a child's learning to dance. A favourite amusement of women with infants just beginning to walk is to let them dance. The tiny tot, barely able to maintain an upright posture for ten minutes or so, is set up on its legs. A couple of women—usually the women of a homestead play with an infant thus when they have no work on hand—calling out to it, with laughter and warmth, 'Come on, dance', begin to sing and clap a dance rhythm and execute a few steps. Tale infants respond with every sign of pleasure to such stimulus and by the age of about 3 have learnt, in a sketchy and diagrammatic but specifically recognizable way, the rhythms and the main steps of the festival dances. The 6-year-old has advanced so far that he or she can sometimes join the real dancing of the adolescents. His sense of rhythm is accurate, he learns the songs quickly, and he has the pattern of the dance clearly. But his dancing is extremely crude still. It tends to be mechanical and monotonous, completely lacking the improvizations and variations, the delicate tracery of step and gesture with which the skilled adult fills out the formal pattern. Every year improves the child's style, but even the adolescent has not yet perfected his or her technique. Yet from babyhood to maturity dancing ability grows continuously.

A child's knowledge of the kinship structure evolves in the same way. The schema, rudimentary and unstable as yet, can be detected in the 3–4-year-old. He or she discriminates kinsfolk from non-kinsfolk, equating the former mainly with people living in close proximity. He knows his own father and mother precisely, but already calls his mother's co-wives 'mother'. Similarly, he knows that 'father' is his own father, but that other men—in the first instance those of the same joint family—are also 'fathers', and he knows that the other kinsfolk frequently seen are brothers, sisters, grandfather, grandmother. But he is still incapable of discriminating genealogical differences; he groups people by generation and by spatial proximity. Thus an adult brother may be described as a

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in sacrifices to domestic shrines; the girls assist in household tasks such as sweeping and carrying water. Towards the end of this period boys whose fathers own cattle go out with the cattle-herds and girls are beginning to help in the preparation of food. A 10-year-old girl can prepare the majority of usual dishes. At the age of 6 or 7 brothers and sisters often play together; at 9 or 10 the sexual dichotomy has become firmly established.[1]

At this stage the play of infancy develops in three directions. The sporadic motor exuberance is transformed into recreational play—organized group games and dances; the rudimentary mimetic play becomes elaborate and protracted imaginative and constructive play; and the rude toy-making of infancy grows into children's arts and crafts.

Tale children have a great many organized games, passed on from one generation of children to the next by drawing younger ones into the games played by those who already know them. The games are traditional, and often built round themes derived from the cultural idiom—farming, hunting, marriage, chiefs, &c. But their value is predominantly recreational. Children play them for the pleasure of collective singing, rhythmical physical activity, and sensory and bodily stimulation. The ordinary dances of moonlight nights in which both adults and children participate are regarded as 'play' of this kind.

Kuobon is a game of this sort. Both boys and girls from 7–8 to about 15 years play it on moonlight nights in single-sex groups. A group of about the same size forms a ring, clasping each other and standing on one leg. The other leg is extended towards the centre of the ring, and the children arrange themselves so that their extended legs cross one another. The group then commences to revolve, singing as they go round and round, *kuobon, yee-e-e la ŋaah*, 'fruits of farming, yee, how nice'. The game goes on until they are tired and the extended legs begin to drop. It breaks up with much laughter, only to start again after a rest. Similar games are played by boys only and others by girls only; but for both sexes dancing is the supreme recreation. In both the mixed dances and the single-sex

[1] Nevertheless, this sexual dichotomy is not so absolute as to prohibit a girl or a woman from stepping into a breach if there is no male available for a man's task; and men often undertake women's work in an emergency.

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857 dances one invariably sees a few small boys or girls at the tail end of the
●535 line. At the beginning of the Festival season one often meets a group of children about 6–9 years old practising the dances in their play, crudely but recognizably.

857 At this stage, and till pubescence, boys spend a great deal of their
868 leisure improving their dexterity with the bow and arrow. They now
224 have bows like a man's but smaller, and real arrows with unbarbed
526 heads. They go about in small groups practising marksmanship—shooting at a guinea corn-stalk or a chunk of wood. Sometimes they challenge one another and shoot according to certain rules. The loser forfeits an arrow to the winner. All this is recreational play; but it has a very practical aspect, recognized by adults and children. In Taleland the bow is the symbol of manhood; and every man must know how to wield it. The long years of practice necessary to become an accomplished shot begin with the small boy's first toy bow and extend through the play of childhood and pubescence. Part of this play-practice is the hunting of small field animals and birds. To the boy it is a real hunt, demanding knowledge and alertness and yielding a favourite titbit. Yet it is play as well, being neither obligatory nor dangerous, and being mimetically derived from an adult activity. This has great educational importance. The boy in his play identifies himself with the men, accepts their practical valuation of the bow and arrow, and tries out, as it were, what it feels like to be a man in this respect. Boys often hunt thus in groups, especially when they are out herding cattle, and share the spoil, thus training themselves in co-operation and fair dealing. By the age of 11–12 boys begin to accompany their fathers or elder brothers to real hunts, though they remain onlookers for the most part, whose principal task is to help carrying home anything killed. Not till adolescence will they be allowed to use barbed and poisoned arrows; but quasi-playful hunting thus shades over into the real activity for which it is a preparation.

857 Imaginative play is rich and frequent during this period, though its
153 themes appear to be few. Family life, the principal economic activities, and domestic ritual supply the mimetic content. Sometimes children are entirely preoccupied with such play for hours at a time; often it is interwoven with practical activities or appears as a resonance of practical activities in which the children co-operate.

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About noon, the owner of the pool arrives, usually quite unceremonially, followed by kinsmen and kinswomen. The owner of the first pool to be fished in 1934 was a minor chief of the *Namoos* group, the *Bolgraana*, who had only recently been installed. To mark this, his first fishing expedition, he arrived escorted by musicians and in the full splendour of his red cap, the prime badge of his rank, and a gaudy gown. The musicians at once became the centre of an eager crowd which soon disposed itself in a dance, while the chief proceeded to his seat under a tree near the bank, the traditional place "where my ancestors (former chiefs) used to sit," he explained. The owner of a pool always registers his claims, in the first instance, by thus taking up his traditional seat, though he need not remain there once the fishing commences.

The multitude is now all keyed up, ready for the plunge. People begin to move about, a tumult of conversation rises from the far side of the river, showing how intense is the anticipatory excitement. As yet not a single person has dared to enter the pool, except at its very fringe to get a drink of water. But the most important preparatory activity is still to come—the magic. The owner is discussing this and other matters with half a dozen elders and men of rank, kinsmen and clansmen from several *Namoos* settlements, or, if he belongs to the *Tallis* group, from *Tallis* settlements. The groups never mix in this sort of situation, in which political, legal, and ritual prerogatives are canvassed. Nevertheless the discussion is not private, nor is its subject matter stereotyped. But its purpose is clear: to affirm the owner's rights. The nature and basis of these rights were formulated explicitly and with vigour in one such discussion: So and so, the chief, owns this pool. His ancestors held the chieftainship before him and owned the pool; he was invested by the Paramount Chief according to the prescribed and traditionally ordained procedure; therefore he owns the pool, as his ancestors did before him, and is consequently entitled to the traditionally fixed tribute, the first fish of respectable size which anyone catches. Nobody must cheat or fight about a fish, as was done in the previous expedition. All this is repeated over and over in rhetorical monologue by each member of the *extempore* council. It is, of course, perfectly well known to everybody, and, what is more curious, the speakers seem to address themselves entirely to their own circle, some of whom will not even enter the water, and all of whom will receive a share of the chief's tribute if the catch is a good one. The purpose of the discussion is apparently not publicity but psychological—assuring the owner that his rights are acknowledged, encouraging him, demonstrating to him that the most respected citizens are on his side and on the side of the traditional guarantees of property rights.

Now comes the crucial act of the series leading up to the actual fishing, the performance of the magical rites. The officiant has been waiting for the owner's word to start at the appointed, traditionally hallowed place, on the bank or by the waterside, surrounded by a number of men and boys of his own lineage, all descendants of the ancestor who originally acquired the magic. There are a number of typical features—

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From this divination emerges, first, whom the ancestor spirits have selected to bring the sacred Gingauŋ drum, after which the Namoos' festival is named, out of the Chief's court chamber. There are two Gingauŋ drums: a small one, the sacred one brought by their ancestor Mosur, and a large one, subsequently manufactured merely to add liveliness to the dance. Second, the seance establishes what sacrifices have to be made upon the shrines of the original ancestors of Tongo. In this seance the Chief and his elders, the representatives, metaphorically speaking, of the clan conscience, show how vividly the hallowing of the tradition is felt by them. The sacrifices have a double intention; to thank the ancestors for a successful harvest of early millet and for the standing crop of guinea corn, and to avert quarrels and disputes which might occur when great concourses of people flock to the dance. It is for fear of quarrels which might lead to bloodshed and thus to unknown supernatural calamities that only a youth authorized by the ancestor spirits may inaugurate the dance. The divination, as befits the joyful occasion, is nevertheless cheerful.

The sacrifices are carried out immediately, and ritual then sinks into abeyance for a time. The nightly dance occupies the center of social interest, until the moon begins to wane. For a night or two the children have almost complete possession of the dedicated dancing field, practicing their awkward steps. With the waxing moon adults throng to the dance, until in the end even young mothers come out carrying sleepy infants, and the drummers cannot be seen in the center of the great mass of poeple.

This first phase is aptly known as the Gingauŋdeema, "play Gingauŋ." It is monopolized by the younger adults and adolescents, who try out the dancing songs. But the season gets its name mainly from the sexual effervescence associated with it. Women are the cause of the disputes which threaten the peace of the dance. Not a day passes without an elopement, planned on the dancing ground. Unfortunately, few of these marriages survive the festive period; and that, perhaps explains why there is a taboo against carrying out any of the legal formalities of marriage during this month. For Baari and Tongo, the Moon of Waters is a dangerous month, in spite of the festivity, because of the human passions aroused, as is evident from the fact that it is a grave sin to shed blood on the earth, even from a scratch or cut. Strangers, and in particular Tallis, flock to watch the dance, and of course to find lovers. But only Namoos may enter the dance.

A fortnight's lull ensues during which the guinea-corn is harvested. Then comes the Moon of Daa, so named from the final phase of the festival, and the "real Gingauŋ," Gingauŋ maŋa. But I must resist the tempta-

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tion to enter into an acount of the dynamics of the dance itself. It is the first Gingaun incomparably enhanced. The older men, expert dancers, are in charge, though the younger ones and even women and children have full freedom to join.

A point of psychological interest is the choral refrain which provides the organizing slogan for the dance. It consists of a verse taunting a member of a co-clan of Tongo with some moral failing. To taunt the Tallis thus would be tantamount to declaring war.

The festival reaches a climax in the second week of the moon, when it squeezes out every other social activity. In the dance this is marked by a striking bit of pantomime which symbolizes the pride of the Namoos in their chieftainship and chiefly ancestors. Suddenly, long after midnight, when the moon is at its highest and the dance at a pitch of intensity, a dozen solemn figures begin to press slowly towards the center of the dance. Spectators and dancers make way for them. They stand in rank, shoulder to shoulder, unlike the dancers who form a file. The dancers shuffle, leap and stamp, but they bob gravely from foot to foot, erect, faces set like masks, chanting a low, wordless chant. They wear faded red caps and gorgeous, though sometimes tarnished, gowns—the garb of chiefs—and carry spears. They represent their grandfathers and ancestors who had been chiefs and men of rank. The natives delight both in the dramatic contrast, and in identifying the chiefs whom the mummers represent.

And now ritual returns. On the fifteenth night there is no dancing. On the contrary, not a single person stirs out of doors after dark. For that night all the ancestors of Tongo come to dance Gingaun, and he who hears or sees the phantom dance dies at once. Everybody hangs out his or her finest garments for the ancestors to borrow for their dance—spiritually, of course. For they keep a sharp look-out against human thieves, who have been known not to respect the occasion. Next day, towards noon, the Baari Tendaana calls upon the Chief of Tongo, bringing a small pot of consecrated beer. All present must drink of it, and the ancestors too, for a gourd-full is sent out to be poured on the grave of Mosur. It is a convivial scene, which instantly becomes serious as the Chief begins to address the Tendaana. This is the gist of his speech: The day has returned for us to meet as our ancestors used to, and to do as they did so that we shall have untroubled sleep, marry new wives, and beget many children. We have had a good harvest. May we all live to see Golib and sow our millet in that moon successfully. May my chiefly ancestors and Mosur permit this and permit us to gain new life so that next year at this time we again celebrate Daa. The Tendaana responds with a similar blessing, saying that Baat

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Daa (the supreme boyar of the Baari people) and Mosur will jointly prosper the land. Then he departs. That day Baari celebrates Daa. 796

That same evening the large Gingauŋ drum is escorted to Baari by the Gbizug Tendaana and the Wakyi Tendaana, following a ritual path. All Tongo flocks to Baari to dance with great enthusiasm on a traditional spot outside the grove of Baat Daa. Near the dance, but silently aloof, wait the Gbizug and Wakyi Tendaanas. A few hundred yards away, as if indifferent to the dance, young men of Baari assemble, wearing their ritual garb, a goatskin. When the Baari Tendaana and his ritual coadjutors arrive to join them, the Gbizug and Wakyi Tendaanas are summoned. Greetings are exchanged, and then led by the Baari Tendaana, the whole company files away in a most solemn and silent procession, brought up by the youngest members carrying pots of consecrated beer. With utter gravity this procession thrice encircles the dancers who continue to dance as if oblivious to this. Anyone who dares to break through the encircling procession is doomed to a supernatural death. The procession files away again, into the sacred grove. There the Tendaanas pour libations of beer to Baat Daa, calling down the very same blessings as had been invoked by the Chief earlier in the day. They drink the beer and send a small pot out to the representative of the Chief, who is among the dancers. Now the Tendaanas' procession emerges, again solemnly encircles the dancers, and files away. At a tree which marks the path to Tongo they stop, and marching round it in a circle, chant a song the burden of which is Mosur boot kuliga ("Mosur wants to go home"). Upon this signal the allusion of which is obvious to all, the dance breaks up, the ritual is over. 796 535 [784]

That finishes the Gingauŋ dance for a year. The next three days at Tongo are given over to the gayest festivities of the season, the celebration of Daa. This is a New Year's festival, a fitting conclusion to the dancing season. Dressed in their best and gaudiest clothes, the whole of Tongo assembles at the Chief's compound on the day after the rites at Baari. From far and near, Tongo women who have married away return to their homes, many bearing gifts of special food from their husbands. The Chief's house throngs with his people and strangers. His elders bring him presents of guinea fowls and he, sitting in state, has a bullock slaughtered, part of which he shares amongst them. The Chief, it is true, gets the better part of this exchange of gifts, but good form is satisfied. The afternoon is devoted to light-hearted dancing in praise of the Chief. 796 [574]

The Gbizug Tendaana has also celebrated Daa, but very quietly. That evening, however, Chief and Tendaana meet in ceremonial. The scene is the dancing ground. This is a dedicated area which may not be cultivated. 796 778

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initiands next day. They have been treated throughout with veiled contumely, like infants and outcasts, seated on the bare ground, their backs to the ceremonial. When the sacrifices are over and the beer consumed, the initiands are brusquely dragged up, each in turn, to the altar of the bɔɣar. Kneeling before it, quivering with fear, his eyes blindfolded by the hands of one officiant, his hands clasping a chicken whose neck he saws off on a rough stone with the help of another officiant, he is made to swear repeatedly "If I tell anybody may I die." This then is the secret of the impregnability of the Tallis bɔɣar cult both to the Namoos and to the ethnologist.

Before they leave, the meat and flour of all the sacrifices are divided out according to strict rules of prerogative; the initiands being fed with a tiny piece of meat and flour dumpling each. The rôle of each participant kinship group is defined in terms of the officiant it elects, the contributions it makes to the sacrifices, and the share of meat, beer, and flour it receives. The natives stress this organizational balance more jealously than details of ritual; for it is the structural framework which preserves the ritual collaboration. Finally, all the communicants, including those newly initiated, are daubed on brows, arms, and knees with consecrated red mud, the concrete emblem of the beneficient magic they are carrying home.

Bɔɣaraam, like Daa, is the occasion when married daughters return home with gifts of food and guinea fowls from their husbands, and men who have migrated to distant parts try to return for the ceremonies. Dancing follows after the ritual day. But as each settlement dances by itself, the Bɔɣaraam dancing is neither so impressive nor so great a focus of social interest as Gingauŋ. This time the Namoos are onlookers, for they may not enter the Tallis dances.

The Bɔɣaraam festival of the Hill Tallis thus appears to be homologous with the Gingauŋ and Daa of the Namoos, and the Daa of Baari, in its calendrical reference and its functional context. For Chief, Tendaanas, and elders, the fathers of the community who bear the greatest burden of responsibility for its welfare, the ritual is the dominant theme. For those of lesser social responsibility, the dancing and festivity, the fellowship of jubilation, are of major value. For everybody, these are festivals of reunion in which family and wider agnatic connections, the unique fact for the individual of having been born into a certain family and clan, receive special emphasis.

But what must chiefly interest us, in this paper, is to observe how these festivals differentiate and bind the Namoos and the Tallis. On the one hand it seems as if each community consolidates itself socially and morally by the very act of repulsing its neighbor. Behind its stone wall of exclusiveness,